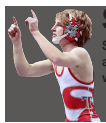




People / 1C

John Horton recalls his first band Blind Mary and rehearsing in old school house



Sports / 1B

St. Clair's Ryan Meek (pictured) and Brock Woodcock win state wrestling titles, go undefeated



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Hoffmanns' plans becoming reality



Land of opportunity

David Hoffmann stands on his back porch, overlooking the Missouri River Feb. 8 in St. Albans.

13 months later, Hoffmanns reflect on their investment in Augusta and what is coming next

By Ethan Colbert
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Driving into Augusta a few years ago, David Hoffmann said the rural St. Charles community was a far cry from the town he remembered as a boy in the mid-1960s when he and his father, Harvey, would criss-cross the countryside collecting milk from various dairies.

"It was dying what I think people would say was a slow death, but it was certainly dying. There was only one business on Walnut Street and everything else was shuttered and closed. The buildings were in really, really bad disrepair," Hoffmann said in a recent interview with *The Missourian*.

It's been one year since The Hoffmann Family of Companies announced it planned to invest up to \$150 million in the community by buying wineries and vineyards, building a new hotel and conference center, and opening multiple businesses.

The Missourian is marking the anniversary

sary with a two-part series about the plan and the progress Hoffmann has made. The second story will run in *The Missourian's* weekend edition.

Hoffmann said he hopes visitors to Augusta today have a much different perspective on the community that was recognized by the federal government in 1980 as the first designated American Viticultural Area in the country.

"I'm kind of nostalgic when it comes to Augusta... I can honestly say that this one means more to us both."

David Hoffmann
Owner

Gas, 225 Jackson St., the Augusta Emporium, 5595 Walnut St.; Kickstand Augusta at the Katy Trail, 5533 Water St.; and

• See Hoffmann Page 2A

Schatz lends U.S. Senate campaign \$1M

By Geoff Folsom
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State Sen. Dave Schatz, R-Sullivan is helping his U.S. Senate campaign out with a \$1 million loan.

Schatz reported \$1,161,707 in cash on hand, as of the Dec. 31 reporting date. That ranked third among the 20 candidates to file with the Federal Election Commission, behind fellow Republicans U.S. Rep. Vicky Hartzler, who reported \$1,779,338, and Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt, who reported \$1,271,674.

Schatz made the \$1 million loan Dec. 31, listing himself as the owner of Schatz Construction LLC.

"Obviously, I believed it was necessary," Schatz told *The Missourian*. "I believe in what I'm doing and know it's going to take some resources in order to do it."

Schatz said it is possible he could loan his campaign more in the future.

"We're working on all of that right now, so that's

• See Schatz Page 2A



Dave Schatz

Highway 50 improvements coming soon

By Geoff Folsom
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A planned \$5.3 million in improvements on Highway 50 through the heart of Union are the latest in a series of upgrades along the route in Franklin County.

Improvements on Highway 50 east of Union heading toward the intersection with Interstate 44 concluded last year. That project featured repaving and turn lanes at the intersection with East Denmark Road and turn lanes at Highway 50's intersection with Highway EE, west of Union. It cost \$2.1 million.

The upcoming project involves resurfacing a 2.5 mile stretch of Highway 50 from 0.2 miles west of the intersection with Independence Drive, east to the intersection with Highway 47 south.

Once this stretch is complete, one major segment will remain to be upgraded, said Stephen O'Connor, the Missouri

• See Highway 50 Page 4A

Political hopefuls file as election nears

Newcomers seek area's congressional seat

By William Skipworth
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Candidate filing for state and federal elected office in Missouri opened Tuesday, giving candidates their first chance to officially enter into the political fray.

As of 11 a.m., 14 candidates — nine Republicans and five Democrats — had filed to run for the U.S. Senate, a seat being vacated by Roy Blunt, a Republican who announced he would not seek reelection.

In the order they filed, those Republican candidates are: Republicans Mark McCloskey, a St. Louis attorney who garnered national attention after waving a gun at Black Lives Matter protesters in June 2020; Eric Greitens, the disgraced former governor who resigned in 2018 amid multiple scan-

• See Newcomers Page 4A



Entering the race

Franklin County Clerk Tim Baker, left, helps Matthew Becker, right, as he files for reelection as Franklin County prosecuting attorney. Filing for the August election began Tuesday and will run through March 29.

Missourian Photo/Julia Hansen.

Challengers hope to unseat new judges

By Geoff Folsom
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Some familiar faces new to county politics were among the first in line when filing for the August primaries opened Tuesday.

The first to file was Lisa Smart, who is running for the Franklin County recorder of deeds job now held by Jennifer Metcalf. Smart, the chief deputy recorder of deeds, has worked in the office 18 years.

"Jenny (Metcalf) is planning her retirement," Smart said. "I'm, basically, seeking a promotion from the voters."

Later Tuesday, Metcalf confirmed that after "much deliberation" she will retire at the end of her term.

Presiding Commissioner Tim Brinker, of Washington, who filed to run for reelection

• See Judges Page 4A



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HOFFMANN

CONTINUED FROM 1A

a number of bed-and-breakfast properties.

Their company has purchased more than 25 properties in the Augusta area that span more than 700 acres.

The Hoffmanns said they hope to open at least one new business every six months.

"The trick with Augusta is recognizing that people are really coming for the wineries and that downtown is kind of an afterthought, so we don't want to detract from the wineries," Hoffmann said.

Augusta Town Board officials said they are already noticing the "Hoffmann effect" as sales tax receipts are "significantly higher" than projected.

"I think you have to give credit to the Hoffmanns for the increase," Bob Hofer, Town Board chair, said after a recent meeting of the Augusta Planning and Zoning Commission.

Jerri Hoffmann is preparing to launch the Augusta Clothing Co., a boutique catering to women from their 30s to 60s, in March.

David Hoffmann said businesses like a gas station, coffee shop, the Emporium, the Augusta Clothing Co., art galleries, bicycle shop, florist, wedding dress boutique, a men's clothing store, a novelty toy store, a real estate office, a furniture store, a hunting goods store, a gourmet cheese shop, a yoga studio and others will complement the wineries.

Ideally, he said, art galleries would bring in exhibits throughout the year. He also would like a bank to open a branch in Augusta.

"If these businesses bring in 20 more people to downtown Augusta a day then that is a win for us and a win for Augusta," Hoffmann said.

This kind of project isn't new to the family. In addition to Augusta, the Hoffmann Family of Companies has played a pivotal role in downtown rejuvenation efforts in Avon, Colorado; Naples, Florida; and Winnetka, Illinois. In recent weeks the company announced it was making investments in the Mackinac Island in Michigan.

Across the communities, the Hoffmanns said they strive to either open or purchase an existing business each month.

Hoffmann said his family's company now owns 41 waterfront properties on the famed Mackinac Island.

"These businesses are expensive, and they



A year of investment

Jerri and David Hoffmann stand on a dock after christening Miss Augusta Oct. 24, 2021, at the Yacht Club of St. Louis in St. Charles. Over a year ago, the couple announced plans to invest over \$100 million into Augusta, seeking to make the region a wine destination to rival Napa Valley. Missourian Photo/Julia Hansen.

represent big, sophisticated transactions."

Their Augusta project hits closer to home.

"I'm kind of nostalgic when it comes to Augusta," David Hoffmann said.

"This is the fourth downtown that we are working to restore, but I can honestly say that this one means more to us both."

Jerri Hoffmann agreed, saying the couple's "hearts are really in this one."

Jerri and David are not the only family members who have developed strong emotional attachments to Augusta. Their son, Greg, who is the company's CEO, has moved

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downtown Augusta

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us and a win for

Augusta."

David Hoffmann

Owner

into the region from Chicago, with his wife and their four children.

"Every time he would come here for a visit, he would say to us that, 'There's something about this place,'" Jerri Hoffmann said of Greg, who heads the company's real estate portfolio. "There is something about your hometown that gets into your blood and there is something special about it — it's like the smell of the air is different, or the way the sun comes up, or just something that connects deep inside you. That's how he feels about Augusta."

They said their other son, Geoff, is equally committed to continuing their parents' vision for Augusta and for Washington. He is the CEO of DHR International in Chicago.

The family company has announced its in-

tention to open two large hotels in the Augusta region. Work is continuing on Chateau Hoffmann, planned boutique hotel on the former Emmaus Home campus in nearby Marthasville. Construction work will begin soon on the planned Hoffmann Lodge & Spa, a 15,000-square-foot, 65-room hotel and conference center. The hotel is expected to open sometime in 2023.

The company also is in talks to purchase Mid-America Coaches in Washington, recently purchased NOA Medical and is continuing talks with the owners of the Missouri Meerschbaum corn cob pipe factory and several other businesses in Washington, including an unnamed packaging company, a medical supply company, and others.

The Hoffmanns said they currently employ about 500 people in the Washington-Augusta region. Within the next five years, David Hoffmann said he expects that number to surpass 2,000 employees — people whom he hopes to hire from within the local workforce and retain from business acquisitions.

In addition to the business deals, the Hoffmanns said they are committed to being involved community boosters in Augusta. They were the lead sponsor for the Plein Air Festival and donated \$75,000 for new Christmas lights for the annual Christmas Walk.

"We wanted Augusta to look like something out of, you know, a Hallmark movie. That's going to be our goal throughout the year," Hoffmann said, adding that the company will soon be moving a number of Clydesdales to a pasture near Highway 94. Goats will be penned nearby.

"Augusta is a special place," he said. "We want it to be a place where special memories are made."



Presidential appeal

Brothers Zachary Bondor, 10, and Levi Bondor, 12, both of Labadie, accept a shared award for best Abraham Lincoln costume from Washington Public Library Director Nelson Appell. The contest was part of a joint Presidents' Day celebration between the library and Neighborhood Reads Bookstore. Author and Lincoln historian Jan Jacobi, (center) presented on his "Young Lincoln" series at the event. Missourian Photo/Reid Glenn.

SCHATZ

CONTINUED FROM 1A

something we'll have to make a determination on," he said.

Schatz, who announced his run for Senate in mid-November, raised more than \$160,000 from other donors in a month and a half. He received dozens of contributions of \$2,900, the maximum allowable for individual donations.

Among those donating \$2,900 were Rachel Andreasson, of Sullivan, a board member with the Wallis Coaches; Washington business owners Brenda and Rick Bouse, who each donated \$2,900; Dickey Bub President Steve Dickey, of St. Charles; Jonathan Doward, of Union, owner of Hansen Franklin County Land Co.; Warren Erdman, of Kansas City, executive vice president of the Kansas City Southern railroad; Michael Garozzo, of Kansas City, owner of Garozzo's Restaurant; Donna Havey, of Sullivan, general manager of TNT Amusement; James Jones, of Sullivan, vice president of sales with Ditch Witch Work; New Haven homemaker Lois Keaven; Beaufort office manager Monica Keaven; Tiber Health CEO David Lenihan, of St. Louis; Barry Lock, of Sullivan, owner of Shippers Insurance Programs; Sullivan retiree Kathleen Lock; Matthew Montee, of Montee Construction in Sullivan; John and Thomas Newman, of Poplar Bluff, with TNT Enterprises, with John donating \$2,900 and Thomas donating \$5,800; Peterson Oil Owner Don Peterson, of Sullivan, who made two \$2,900 donations; Donald Schaefer, of Sullivan, also listed as a Peterson Oil owner, who also donated \$5,800 total; Schicker Automotive owner John Schicker, of St. Louis; Leslie homemaker Catherine Stumpe, who donated a total of \$5,800; James and Maria Turntine, of Sullivan, who each donated \$2,900; and Wallis Oil executive Lynn Wallis, of Cuba, ac-

cording to the FEC.

Schatz is pleased with his campaign fundraising so far. "A determination on," he said.

"Getting in this race in 45 days and going through Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Year's — I think we were able to accomplish a lot in a short window of time," he said.

Schatz's campaign had only spent \$6,458, as of the report date. Of that, \$2,706 went to WinRed Technical Services, LLC, of Arlington, Virginia, for credit card processing fees; \$2,500 to Leadbelt Strategies LLC, of Jefferson City, for fundraising; and \$1,252 to Victory Enterprises, of Davenport, Iowa, for printing.

"We're focused on at least getting enough resources for us to have viability in this race," Schatz said. "We know that we have to do more."

Schatz said it has been a challenge running his campaign while continuing to serve in his final regular legislative session. Term limits prevent Schatz from running for another term as state senator.

Meanwhile, Schatz raised \$1,900 in the final quarter of 2021 to run for the office of Franklin County Presiding Commissioner — an office he said he is not

running to hold.

The filing, made to the Missouri Ethics Commission, showed a \$1,500 donation from the Madison Political Action Committee and a \$400 donation from the MO Cable PAC.

Schatz spent \$7,493 on the presiding commissioner filing, with the largest expenditures of \$3,210 on digital marketing with Victory Enterprises, \$1,965 on a Senate Christmas party with the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Jefferson City and \$1,500 with the Bill Wallis Charitable Foundation on a charity golf tournament.

Schatz had \$134,943 on hand for the county commission race at the end of 2021, according to his Missouri Ethics Commission report.

"I'm not running for county commission at this point," Schatz said Monday. The seat is held by fellow Republican Tim Brinker.

Schatz said he filed to raise money for the county commission race after he won a second four-year state Senate term in 2018 because he was term-limited and had to find a way to continue raising campaign dollars.

Candidates are not allowed to transfer money between state and federal elections.

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